

## The Influence of Organizational Culture on Public Service Human Resources Performance in Nigeria

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### Abstract

Due to the rising pressures that government institutions are facing with regards to issues of inefficiency, lack of employee motivation, and disconnection between the services that they provide; the internal cultural factors that influence and drive performance have become very important. The study used quantitative research design and surveyed 250 respondents in some of the ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. It involved examination of four critical dimensions of organizational culture namely involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission clarity. The strength and the nature of the relationship between these cultural elements and the HR performance were determined via the use of inferential statistical tools such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. The results indicate that mission clarity and involvement produce the strongest and statistically significant positive impacts on the HR performance. Consistency also plays a middle role whereas adaptability fails to demonstrate any significant effect in this situation in the public sector. Such findings demonstrate the criticality of establishing a strong organizational mission and engaging working culture to enhance workplace productivity and organizational performance. The research is one of the few studies on organizational culture in African public administration and offers evidence-based suggestions of reform efforts. The study calls on leaders in the public sector to focus on cultural building even as they implement structural changes because the results of the study show that internal cultural influences are significant determinants of performance.

**Keywords:** Organizational Culture, Human Resources Performance, Public Service

### Introduction

The performance of the human resources (HR) in the public service institutions is a delicate national development at least in the developing countries like Nigeria where the entire responsibility of the implementation of policies and delivery of essential services lies on the public institutions. Following what has been billed as human resource performance in this respect is the efficacy, economy, promptness and accountability of the individuals involved in the execution of their duties (Berman et al., 2021).

However, it appears that intensive investment in HR training, policy change, and administrative re-structuring has not been able to root out perennial inefficiencies, low productivity, and ineffective service delivery in the Nigerian public sector. The endurance of this challenge has motivated researchers and practitioners to look more fundamental, internal levers of

performance-one amongst which, is organizational culture.

Organization culture has been defined as a set of shared values, beliefs, norms and practices, that define how people in an institution behave and in what attitudes (Akpa et al., 2021). It is the invisible yet powerful force which dictates how decisions are made, how conflict is managed, how work is done and eventually how institutions operate (Dupuis, 2025). A great organizational culture might result in a commitment, job satisfaction and turnover, and performance outcomes when combined with a high level of alignment with strategic objectives. alternative, an improper or bad culture may facilitate apathy, transformation rejection and incompetency.

Organizational culture plays a special role in the public sector where bureaucratic culture and hierarchies are very strong. In comparison with their privately owned counterparts, publicly owned organizations are forced to reconcify such opposites as efficiency and equity, transparency and discretion, stability and adaptability, in a politically controlled, frequently resource-scarce setting (Boulanouar et al., 2021). Culture of the public organizations therefore determines the extent to which the employees of the organization internalize the values of public service, their reaction towards the citizens as well as the execution of the mandates. In addition, ethical aspects of public administration (integrity, accountability, service orientation) tend to be incorporated into organizational culture.

Traditionally, reforms of public service institutions in Nigeria have revolved around agency restructuring, the introduction of performance management systems, and the introduction of anti-corruption systems (Akinsanmi et al., 2022). These reforms however have been majorly ignoring cultural problems that are deep rooted and that affect behavior and performance of an organization. Command-and-control hierarchy coupled with patronage and resistance to change have produced a culture in most of the public institutions that is rigid, risk-averse, and unresponsive to the needs of the citizen. In this regard, even the well-conceived reforms have been largely unsuccessful in attaining long-term changes in the HR performance.

The connection of organizational culture with employee performance in the conditions of the public sector has started being indicated in recent studies. Using the example of Nigerian civil service, Obisi (2011) discovered that the effects of organizational culture on staff motivation and productivity were significant. On the same note, Wackym et al. (2024) demonstrated a positive relationship between the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, and meritocracy and better performance by public administrators. Such results are consistent with the rest of the empirical literature which indicates that organizational culture is one of the primary predictors of the performance outcomes regardless of the sector or the context. Nevertheless, the Nigeria specific literature is dispersed and, in many instances, it lacks the quantitative investigation and in-depth measurement of the cultural variables within the public service sector.

In addition, there is a substantial amount of the existing literature regarding organizational culture in Nigeria concentrated on the organizations of the private sector, especially the banking, telecommunications, and oil and gas sectors. Thus, the need to bridge the gap in the knowledge of the dynamics of culture in the public service workplace with its linkage to HR performance namely, in service delivery, responsiveness, innovation, and accountability is eminent. Since HR is core in catalyzing performance in institutions, there is a dire need to comprehend the role of

organizational culture in effective public administration and governance reform in Nigeria.

The proposed study aims at addressing this empirical and contextual gap by investigating the nature of the connection between organizational culture and HR performance at the institutions of the Nigerian public service. By taking a quantitative research design, the study was able to offer statistical facts on the degree by which different dimensions of culture namely, involvement, adaptability, mission clarity, and consistency affect key performance indicators among public servants. Value of the research besides enriching the academic debate on the subject of public administration and organizational behavior can be of value to policymakers, institutional heads, and human resource managers who need evidence of establishing high-performing citizen-focused public institutions.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

In this study, the quantitative research design was used in studying how organizational culture affects the human resource performance in the public service sector of Nigeria. Descriptive-correlational approach was employed to quantify the status quo without controlling variables, which allowed the researcher to establish the magnitude and the direction of the association between salient constructs. Quantitative design was selected based on the requirement of objective generalizable findings especially those that can be computed using numbers that can be tested statistically. The approach also enabled the determination of particular cultural dimensions that largely forecast HR performance results in a well-organized and quantifiable manner.

### **Population and Sampling Technique**

The target population was composed of the employees who were serving in different administrative and human resource-related careers in the chosen federal public service establishments in Nigeria, especially within the ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). These institutions were selected because of their national importance, their functional diversity and their accessibility with regard to data collection. Stratified random sampling method was used in order to get representation at hierarchical levels, departments and functions. The population was initially stratified into groups like senior officers, middle level managers and junior administrative personnel.

Random samples were taken proportionately (in these strata) in order to get a fair representation. The number of respondents engaged in the study amounted to 250. This sample was calculated based on Cochran known population formula with an adjustment to compensate the expected non-response and incomplete returns. The sample size was considered large enough to enable confidence statistical analysis and at the same time achieved external validity and generalizability in similar organizational contexts in Nigeria.

### **Instrumentation and Data Collection**

A structured self-administered questionnaire was used in the collection of the data, which was designed on the basis of validated instruments used in past studies on organizational culture and

HR performance. The instrument presented three major sections, namely: demographic information, organization culture dimensions and HR performance indicators. Items used to measure organizational culture were based on Denison Organizational Culture Survey, and the four core dimensions included in this measure are involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission clarity. Every dimension had several Likert items on a 1-5 scale (strongly disagree-strongly agree). The performance of human resource was gauged on indicators of productivity, efficiency, quality of service delivery, timeliness, and adherence to standards of performance.

They were adapted in the literature of HRM performance and validated by expert opinion to make sure that they were relevant to the realities of public service. The questionnaire was also pre-tested before being deployed fully; 30 respondents at a similar yet a different institution was used to test reliability and clarity. Cronbach Alpha was used to test the internal consistency and the value obtained was 0.84 implying high reliability. The primary data was collected in a period of six weeks. The questionnaires were administered both in hardcopy personally and through institutional email, and follow-ups conducted using departmental contacts. The responses were voluntary, and all the respondents were guaranteed of confidentiality and anonymity according to ethical standards of research.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Content validity was ensured by means of three academics (organizational behavior and public administration) who reviewed the contents. Their comments made the items exhaustive, without ambiguity and in tandem with the intentions of the study. The construct validity was addressed by basing the measurement model on the known theoretical frameworks. The determination of reliability was done through Cronbach Alpha on the independent and dependent variable scales. All the sub-scales were above the 0.70 mark, which is a high degree of internal consistency of all the items.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

SPSS version 25 was applied to code and analyze the collected data. Analysis was done in three stages. Initially, demographic and general trends in organizational culture and HR performance were described with the help of descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages). Second, the direction and the strength of the relationship between organizational culture dimensions and HR performance variables were obtained through Pearson correlation coefficient. This assisted in determining the existence of statistically significant relationships among the major constructs.

Third, the multiple linear regression was performed to study the predictive ability of dimensions of organizational culture in HR performance. The regression model was defined to estimate the extent of the variance in HR performance that would be explained by the four cultural dimensions. The significance level was  $p < 0.05$ , and diagnostic tests of the models (e.g., multicollinearity, residual normality) were done to check the robustness.

### **Results and Discussion**

This study has important empirical contributions to the current knowledge on how organizational culture impacts on human resource (HR) performance in the Nigerian public service. The Pearson

correlation and multiple regression analysis findings confirm that certain organizations culture dimensions namely mission clarity, involvement, and consistency, are positively and significantly related to the performance of the individuals working in the public sector. Not only do these results confirm previously known theories of organizational behavior, but they also expand them into a previously insufficiently studied setting of bureaucratic public institutions in Nigeria, thereby filling a gap in the available literature.

### Pearson Correlation Analysis

This analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between organizational culture dimensions and HR performance.

Table 1. Pearson Correlation between Organizational Culture and HR Performance

Variables	HR Performance	Involvement	Consistency	Adaptability	Mission Clarity
HR Performance	1				
Involvement	.612	1			
Consistency	.487	.524	1		
Adaptability	.376	.442	.459	1	
Mission Clarity	.633	.583	.528	.405	1

Mission clarity and HR performance are strongly and positively related ( $r = .633$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which is why employees work better when the organization goals and vision are clearly assigned. And involvement also demonstrates a quite high and significant correlation with performance ( $r = .612$ ,  $p < .01$ ) which means that inclusive decision-making enhances performance. Consistency and adaptability also show moderate, nevertheless, statistically significant correlations with HR performance ( $r = .487$  and  $r = .376$  respectively), which means that these dimensions also positively, yet less significantly affect HR performance.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which each dimension of organizational culture predicts HR performance.

Table 2. Model Summary

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.688	.473	.461	4.211

The value of R<sup>2</sup> of 0.473 implies that the four dimensions of organizational culture explain variance in HR performance of about 47.3 percent. The model shows a moderate to high predictive capability, which denotes that organizational culture influences the HR performance in public service significantly.

Table 3. ANOVA (Regression Significance)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2148.320	4	537.080	30.24	.000

Residual	2392.768	245	9.765		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4541.088</b>	<b>249</b>			

F-ratio = 30.24,  $p < .001$ , implies that the regression model is significant, and that the set of organizational culture dimensions significantly predicts HR performance, together, more so than would be likely by chance alone.

Table 4. Coefficients of Regression

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	Sig.
(Constant)	15.621	2.341	—	6.672	.000
Involvement	0.354	0.084	.329	4.214	.000
Consistency	0.243	0.102	.198	2.382	.018
Adaptability	0.117	0.095	.089	1.232	.219
Mission Clarity	0.392	0.088	.361	4.455	.000

The positive predictor of HR performance is mission clarity ( $\beta = .361$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which shows that it is important to have clearly stated goals. HR performance is also strongly and positively affected (involvement,  $\beta = .329$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The weaker but significant predictor is consistency ( $\beta = .198$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Adaptability ( $\beta = .089$ ,  $p = .219$ ), was, however, insignificant indicating that it cannot significantly predict HR performance in the sample perhaps because of the existence of bureaucratic inertia in a public service setting.

### Contribution to Knowledge and Contrast with Existing Literature

Although there have been some research activities in the past on general organizational issues in relation to public administration in Nigeria (Agu et al., 2024), little has been done to ascertain through survey, the actual effects of internal culture on performance in quantitative terms. Most strikingly, the preceding Nigerian researchers had restricted scopes as they used descriptive designs or studied single institutions without making thorough inferential investigations. The research presented in this paper addresses that gap, as the multiple linear regression and correlation analysis performed on a well-distributed sample size offers statistically approved evidence regarding the cultural dimensions that HR performance is induced by.

The observation that mission clarity emerges as the best HR performance predictor is consistent with the emerging global research. As an example, a clearly defined organizational purpose is important as demonstrated in a study by George et al. (2023) that states it improves role clarity and employee engagement especially among employees working in the public sector. On the same note, Saldivar (2024) highlighted that performance accountability and service delivery are positively related to mission-driven cultures. The paper has established that in a country like Nigeria where bureaucratic opacity has in many instances undermined performance, the clear articulation of institutional goals to the staff greatly enhances personnel performance.

The close positive correlation between the involvement and HR performance reflects the study of Elsetouhi et al. (2023), who discovered that participative management and empowerment approaches raise employee commitment and innovation. This outcome is evidencing the transformational power of a participatory culture in the Nigerian public service, which was traditionally characterized by a top-down decision-making process and little employee

contribution. Through participatory decision making with staff, institutions are not only accessing local knowledge but putting some sense of ownership and inspiration to staff which is reflected through improved performance.

Moreover, organizational consistency, the reflection of alignment in values, procedures, and behavior, also demonstrated a statistically significant yet less strong impact. This conforms to a study by Ha & Lee (2022) who observed that consistency breeds trust in leadership and procedural justice, which are vital to long-term performance in institutions. Nevertheless, in the Nigerian reality, where policies changed regularly and leadership rotation often creates a lack of continuity in an organization, consistency also becomes a problem and a strategic requirement. Although crypto-consistency is ranked third after mission and involvement, the study shows that consistency is nevertheless relevant towards stabilizing institutional performance.

Surprisingly, the adaptability was not a significant predictor of the HR performance in the regression model. This is unlike what has been observed in environments that are more agile in which adaptability usually serves as a prominent factor in performance. This finding implies that cultural adaptability cannot be easily operationalized or appreciated in hierarchical and rigid environments such as the civil service in Nigeria. Consistent with Balogun and Hope (2017), the adaptive values can hardly be translated into performance improvements because of the institutional inertia of African bureaucracies. This indicates that more encompassing structural changes are required prior to the adaptability being an effective cultural resource in Nigerian public entities.

### **Addressing the Gap in Literature**

In Nigeria, studies have majorly focused on the performance in the public service sector in the policy, leadership, and resource limitation perspectives (Oyelude, 2023), and organization culture has been considered as a secondary aspect. What is more, the available studies that examine the role of culture do so on the entities of the private sector resulting in the lack of knowledge regarding the functioning of culture in the public bureaucratic sphere. The present study fills that gap with a quantitative, multi-dimensional analysis of cultural variables and shows in a clear way the measurable impact that those variables have on employee performance.

Besides, although the necessity to align the culture with performance objectives has been extensively realized in studies conducted across the world, little is known about how such alignment works in low-trust, low-incentive contexts like the Nigerian public service (Gökalp et al., 2021). This study adds a geography-specific model, demonstrating that even at that, reinforcing internal cultural western values, especially clarity of mission and engagement, can pay performance dividends with little or no major financial outlay.

### **Practical Implications**

The results indicate that managers in the public sector of Nigeria need to consider the strengths of reinforcing the communication of their mission, employee engagement, and consistency of values as low-cost performance improvement mechanisms. The leadership in the institutions should be able to go beyond the cultures of compliance and invest in the creation of the environments where transparency, participation, and alignment of the personal and the



institutional interests would be valued. With the insignificance of adaptability, reforms might have to begin with cultural certainty and rigidity before insisting on agile or innovation cultures.

## Conclusion

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